

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 PM-03 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 PRS-01 IO-03 DPW-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 13309

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VC VS

SUBJ: MR 3 WEEKLY SITREP - JULY 15-21, 1973 QUOTE

HEREWITH REPEAT AMCONSUL BIEN HOA MESSAGE 0303 FYI/ACTION QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BIEN HOA 0313

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VC

SUBJECT: MR 3 WEEKLY SITREP - JULY 15-21, 1973

1. WAR HEATED UP IN MR3. DURING WEEK ENDING 0800 JULY 20, 199
MILITARY CLASHES WERE REPORTED, UP FROM 126 PREVIOUS WEEK, AND
HIGHEST SINCE EARLY DAYS OF CEASE-FIRE I. THESE INCLUDED 44
GROUND ATTACKS (TWO INVOLVING ESTIMATED COMPANY-SIZED COMMUNIST
UNITS), 106 ATTACKS BY FIRE (17 OVER 20 ROUNDS), 11 COMBINED
GROUND AND FIRE ATTACKS (ONE OF BATTALION-SIZE WITH 400 ROUNDS),
EIGHT SMALL ARMS HARASSMENTS, FOUR GROUND TO AIR FIRINGS, TWO
ABDUCTIONS OF GVN CIVILIANS, 23 MINE OR GRENADE DETONATIONS
(THREE CIVILIAN) AND ONE MAJOR TERRORIST INCIDENTS, IN TAY NINH
JULY 13 WHEN A PLASTIC CHARGE EXPLODED IN A ROADSIDE REFRESH-
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MENT STAND, KILLING ONE AND WOUNDING EIGHT. GVN LOSSES WERE

32 KILLED (SEVEN CIVILIANS), 211 WOUNDED (30 CIVILIANS) AND TWO MISSING (ONE CIVILIAN). REPORTED COMMUNIST LOSSES WERE 99 KIA, FOUR CAPTURED (THREE FEMALE), FOUR VC DETAINED, TEN RALLIERS, AND SOME WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT. BINH DUONG PROVINCE HAD LION'S SHARE OF CLASHES (86); BINH LONG 26, HAU NGHIA 21, LONG KHANH 16, TAY NINH 13, PHUOC LONG 11, GIA DINH 10, LONG AN SIX, BIEN HOA FIVE, PHUOC TUY FOUR, AND RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE ONE.

2. FIGHTING CONTINUED TO GO BADLY FOR ARVN IN BINH DUONG PROVINCE. 9TH REGIMENT OF ARVN 5TH DIVISION REMAINED IN PLACE ABOVE PHU GIAO DISTRICT TOWN ON INTERPROVINCIAL ROUTE 1-A, BUT COMMUNISTS WERE ATTACKING ELEMENTS OF 7TH REGIMENT OF 5TH, AND 43RD AND 52ND REGIMENTS OF 18TH, ALONG 1-A BELOW PHU GIAO, WHERE THEY CLOSED ROAD JULY 14 AND STOPPED 20-TRUCK MILITARY CONVOY INTENDED FOR BELEAGUERED PHUOC LONG PROVINCE. COMMUNISTS ALSO SHELLED LAI KHE SEVERAL TIMES WITH 122 MM HOWITZER, (FIRST TIME THIS LONG-RANGE ARTILLERY HAS BEEN USED IN MR 3), AND ATTACKED GVN UNITS ON AND NEAR NATIONAL HIHWAY 13 BELOW BEN CAT. SOME OBSERVERS THINK COMMUNISTS ARE NOW HOPING, NOT ONLY TO PREVENT CLEARING OF 1-A ABOVE PHU GIAO, UBT TO ADD ALL OF ENTIRE NORTHERN BINH DUONG PROVINCE TO THEIR ZONE OF CONTROL. MEANWHILE, RICE SUPPLY SITUATION IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE, WHICH HAD BECOME CRITICAL AFTER FIGHTING CLOSED THE PROVINCE'S ROAD LIFELINE, HAS BEEN EASED BY AIRLIFT (AGAINST SOME COMMUNIST ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE) PROVIDING 20 TONS FOR MILITARY AND 20 FOR CIVILIANS, WITH TOTAL 200 TONS PLANNED FOR CIVILIAN CONSUMPTION.

3. WEATHER AND COMMUNIST ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE HAVE PREVENTED PLANNED ROTATION OF 92ND RANGERS FROM TONLE CHAM RANGER BASE CAMP, ALTHOUGH OFFER OF ONE-RANK PROMOTION HAS PRODUCED AMPLE SUPPLY OF VOLUNTEERS FROM AMONG RANGERS AT AN LOC TO REPLACE DEMORALIZED HEROES OF TONLE CHAM.

4. AFTER 17 DAYS OF DETENTION AND MISTREATMENT BY COMMUNISTS, XUAN LOC CANDELS CPTS. PATTEN AND THOMPSON WERE FINALLY RELEASED BY PRG IN NORTHERN XUYEN MOC DISTRICT, PHUOC TUY PROVINCE AT 1800 JULY 15. COMMUNIST EFFORTS CONTINUED UNTIL LAST MINUTE TO GET CANDELS TO SIGN STATEMENTS ADDMITTING THEY WERE AMERICANS
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(THE ULTIMATE INSULT) SPYING FOR GVN. CANDELS WERE TIRED BYT IN GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS. ALL ICCS V CANDELS ARE SCHEDULED TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM THIS REGION NEXT WEEK.

5. IN EASTERN LONG KHANH PROVINCE MORNING JULY 16, COMMUNISTS UNEXPECTEDLY RELEASED 44 RVNAF POWS. ALL HAD BEEN CAPTURED DURING 1972 IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN EASTERN MR3; NONE WERE ON LOST OF POWS PRG HAD TOLD GVN IT HELD AS OF JANUARY 28,

1973.

6. TPJMC V GVNDL CHIEF COL. LONG TOLD CONSUL JULY 20 THAT GVN WOULD EXCHANGE CIVILIAN PRISONERS WITH COMMUNISTS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THIS REGION JULY 23-28. GVN IS RELEASING 4,364 (INCLUDING 33 MILITARY MEN) AND RECEIVING ONLY 28 CIVILIANS.

7. SPECIAL JULY 14 MR 3 MEETING UNDER CHARIMANSHIP OF MR 3 CG LTG MINH LAUNCHED CAMPAIGN TO SHUT OFF FLOW OF ESSENTIAL ITEMS VIA PROFITEERS AND OTHERS TO COMMUNISTS, PARTICULARLY IN TAY NINH PROVINCE. MINH INSTRUCTED PROVINCE CHIEFS TO INSTITUTE AND ENFORCE STRICT ECONOMIC CONTROLS, AND IDENTIFY ARE ARREST THOSE INVOLVED. THEY WERE TOLD TO CALL IN BUSINESSMEN AND MORE OR LESS THREATEN THEM WITH BANISHMENT FROM THE COMMUNITY IF THEY TRADED WITH COMMUNISTS. TAY NINH PROVINCE CHIEF INSISTED THAT PROBLEM OF TRADING WITH ENEMY HAS ITS ROOTS IN SAIGON, WHERE TRADERS ARE PROTECTED BY HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS. COMMENT: MEETING WAS REMARKABLE FOR CANDOR WITH WHICH THOSE PRESENT DISCUSSED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIAL CORRUPTION AND TRADING WITH ENEMY, BUT WE REMAIN SKEPTICAL ABOUT LASTING RESULTS FROM ANTI-TRADING CAMPAIGN. END COMMENT.

8. RESULTS OF A DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH TEAM POLL OF 514 RESPONDENTS IN FIVE MR 3 PROVINCES IN LATE JUNE AND EARLY JULY INDICATE CAUTIOUS POPULAR WELCOME FOR JUNE 13 JOINT COMMUNIQUE, WHICH PEOPLE REGARDED AS BASICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO SVN PEOPLE AS WELL AS TO GVN. NEVERTHELESS THERE WAS MAJORITY BELIEF THAT COMMUNISTS WOULD NOT RESPECT CEASE-FIRE; AMBIVALENT VIEW THAT DELINEATION OF ZONES OF CONTROL MIGHT BE GOOD FOR SVN PEOPLE BUT BAD FOR NATION, BECAUSE IT IS DE FACTO RECOGNITION AND CESSION OF TERRITORY TO COMMUNISTS; DIVIDED OPINION ON WHETHER

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COMMUNIQUE WOULD LEAD TO SVN POLITICAL SOLUTION, AND WHAT POLITICAL MAP OF SVN WOULD LOOK LIKE ONE YEAR FROM NOW. SEVERAL RESPONSES REFLECTED LONG-HELD SVN BELIEF THAT THEIR FATE IS IN HANDS OF BIG POWERS, BUT NOW THIS BELIEF INCLINES THEM TOWARD OPTIMISM ABOUT FUTURE, SINCE THEY THINK BIG POWERS HAVE NOW AGREED ON PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WHICH GVN AND VC WILL HAVE TO FOLLOW.

WALKINSHAW UNQUOTE
MARTIN

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